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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 52nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 26 July 1996, at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire)

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SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

The meeting was called to order at 4.55 p.m.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION, SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTICS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES (continued) (E/1996/89)

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the Presidential summary of the high-level segment contained in document E/1996/89.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEMES (continued)

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED CONCLUSIONS ON THE THEME OF THE 1995 COORDINATION SEGMENT OF THE COUNCIL (continued) (E/1996/L.21)

Mr. HENZE (Germany) said that an agreement in principle had been reached on the cross-sectoral theme for the coordination segment of the Council's 1997 substantive session. The theme, based on proposals put forward by the Group of 77 and the European Union, would be "Mainstreaming of the gender perspective in the activities of the United Nations system". A decision on a sectoral theme had been postponed until the Council's resumed session. However, as a heavy workload was anticipated for the resumed session, he suggested that informal consultations should be held beforehand in order to arrive at a more precise definition of the proposed sectoral theme of "water".

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, introduced a non-paper containing the draft resolution* which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution E/1996/L.21, entitled "Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227: initiation of reviews" and drew attention to a number of revisions.

Ms. KELLY (Secretary of the Council), said that the resumed session referred to in paragraph 1 could not be held unless it was authorized by the Council. Furthermore, in adopting the programme budget for 1996-1997, the General Assembly had decided that savings of $103.9 million must be realized during the biennium. Under those circumstances, it would not be possible to modify the calendar of conferences in order to accommodate the additional

* The revised text was subsequently issued as document E/1996/L.50.

meetings of a 1996 resumed session. The Council had been advised that the cost for a five-day session in the autumn would be US$ 74,000.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) expressed surprise at the last minute announcement of budgetary implications of the resumed session, to which reference had already been made in a number of resolutions and decisions adopted that week. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227, the Council must decide on the themes for its 1997 high-level segment not later than at a resumed session in autumn 1996. Thus, it did not seem possible that additional financing would be required in order to carry out a mandate which had already been approved by the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT said that he would take it that the Council wished to hold a resumed session in the autumn.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) stressed that, since the Council already had a mandate to hold a resumed session, it must do so within existing resources.

It was so decided.

The draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution E/1996/L.21, as orally revised, was adopted.

Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada) said that the progress achieved in the negotiations was really very slight. His delegation had repeatedly affirmed that the objective of reform was not - as many feared - to curb the activities of the United Nations but rather to improve their efficiency and effectiveness and to enable the Organization to play a central role in the field of development. Those who defended the status quo were actually weakening the economic and social sector by undermining its credibility and its relevance.

His delegation, Norway and the Russian Federation had sponsored a transparent and purely procedural draft resolution designed to implement General Assembly resolution 50/227. The failure to adopt that resolution in its original form had shaken his delegation's confidence in the capacity of the Organization's economic and social system to adapt to new realities. His delegation hoped that, during the resumed session, all delegations would be prepared to accept the changes that must be made in the system in order for the United Nations to make a significant and credible contribution in the field of development.

Mr. MURPHY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union had joined the consensus reluctantly. The Union had been under the impression that the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/227 would mark the beginning of a very serious and expeditious restructuring and revitalization process. During negotiations it had been agreed that priority status would be accorded to the reviews of certain functional and regional commissions. It was disappointing to see, in the resolution just adopted, what had happened the first time that that agreement was put to the test. However, the Organization could not afford to lose time in implementing reforms, which were vital to its performance in the field of development. In that spirit, the Union had joined the consensus, even though the Council's resolution should have conveyed more effectively the sense of urgency contained in General Assembly resolution 50/227.

Ms. LEBL (United States of America) also expressed disappointment. The reform process called for in the resolution was much too slow. Her delegation had joined the consensus because meaningful reform of the functional commissions and expert bodies was vital to the work of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. It hoped, however, that all delegations would work to achieve concrete results during the 1997 session.

Mr. ACUÑA (Cost Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the resolution just adopted represented important progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227 and demonstrated the Council's commitment to the review process.

Mr. RAMOUL (Algeria) said that the statements that some delegations had made regarding the resolution just adopted were unfounded, unjust and incorrect. The objective of the reforms was not necessarily to improve the United Nations; in many cases there was a hidden objective, namely, to marginalize the majority of the countries of the Organizations and to grant greater privileges to a handful of influential countries. While there was a pressing need to reform the Bretton Woods institutions and the Security Council - both of which were blatant anachronisms - that was an area where the countries that supported reforms were conservative.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

(a) FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (continued) (E/1996/L.45)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, reporting on the results of informal consultations on draft resolution E/1996/L.45, entitled "Progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120", drew attention to a number of minor drafting changes.

Draft resolution E/1996/L.45, as orally amended, was adopted.

(b) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES ON A SYSTEM-WIDE BASIS: STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND THE BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS IN THE AREAS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT ALL LEVELS, INCLUDING THE FIELD LEVEL (continued) (E/1996/L.20, L.22 and L.48)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, introduced draft resolution E/1996/L.48, entitled "Strengthening collaboration between the United Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions", which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolutions E/1996/L.20 and L.22, and read out a minor drafting change.

Mr. CHULKOV (Russian Federation) said that he supported the draft resolution. However, there were some inaccuracies in the Russian version of the draft, which would be brought to the secretariat's attention.

Draft resolution E/1996/L.48, as orally amended, was adopted.

Draft resolutions E/1996/L.20 and L.22 were withdrawn.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, reporting on the results of the informal consultations, said that consensus had been reached on a draft decision* the text of which he proceeded to read out.

Mr. DELACROIX (France) said that it was regrettable that the draft decision, like a number of other documents submitted to the Council, was available only in English. Although his delegation would not oppose the adoption of the draft decision, it reserved the right to re-examine the text when it became available in French.

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* Subsequently issued as document E/1996/L.52.

Mr. TALBOT (Guyana) proposed that the words "at its substantive session of 1996" should be inserted at the end of the second sentence for purposes of clarification.

The draft decision, as orally amended, was adopted.

(e) ENERGY (continued) (E/1996/24, E/1996/L.40)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, introduced draft resolution E/1996/L.40, entitled "Coordination of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in the field of energy" which he was submitting on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolutions I and II contained in document E/1996/24.

Draft resolution E/1996/L.40 was adopted.

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, drew attention to the draft decisions contained in chapter I.B of the report of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development (E/1996/24).

Draft decision I

Mr. MURPHY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union wished to join the consensus in support of the draft decision, and that the question of subsidies addressed in subparagraph (b) of the draft decision should be seen in the context of paragraph 17 (d) of decision 4/14 of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/1996/28).

Draft decision I was adopted.

Draft decision II

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, drew attention to a number of minor drafting changes and the following amendments. The phrases "subject to any change that may be required, taking into account the review of the role and working methods of the Committee and its relationship with other bodies in the context of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227; and also stresses the need for the Committee to study a broad range of environmentally sound and efficient energy technologies;" should be added at the end of subparagraph (b). It should be followed by a new subparagraph which would read as follows: "Asks the Committee to review its agenda in view of resolution E/1996/L.40 entitled 'Coordination of the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system in the field of energy' and Decision I contained in the report." In addition, item 4 (b) of the draft provisional agenda should be amended to read "renewable sources of energy

including biomass ethanol, with special emphasis on wind energy", as should the title of the corresponding report of the Secretary-General, and item 6 should be deleted.

Draft decision II, as orally amended, was adopted.

(h) INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION (continued) (E/1996/L.35)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, reporting on the outcome of the informal consultations on draft resolution E/1996/L.35, entitled "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction", said that agreement had been reached, and he drew attention to a number of changes. The first line of the third preambular paragraph should be replaced by the following: "Reaffirming the commitment to the effective implementation of the goals ...", and the words "least-developed countries," should be inserted after the word "which" in the last line of the fourth preambular paragraph. Paragraph 2 should be changed to read "Reiterates the distinct character of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction as a framework for action which facilitates the effective integration of disaster reduction into planning at all levels, in particular at the national and community levels"; the first two lines of paragraph 3 should be reworded as follows: "Reaffirms that disaster reduction forms an integral part of sustainable development strategies and national development plans of vulnerable countries and communities, through the ...", and the phrase "including the need to share the necessary technology to prevent, reduce and mitigate disasters," should be inserted after the word "activities" in the third line of paragraph 4. The first three lines of paragraph 5 should be replaced by the following: "Underlines the need for the United Nations system to ensure the integration of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action in the coordinated ..." and paragraph 7 should be reworded as follows: "Recommends that adequate consideration be given to the International Framework of Action for the Decade as part of the evaluation and overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 in 1997.".

Draft resolution E/1996/L.35, as orally amended, was adopted.

(i) FOLLOW-UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/106: BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1996/L.26)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, reporting on the results of the informal consultations on draft resolution E/1996/L.26, entitled

"Corruption and bribery in transnational commercial activities", said that it had been agreed that consideration of the text should be continued at the Council's resumed session in the fall. He read out the text of a draft decision* to that effect which he recommended for adoption.

Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) noted that the resumed session of the Council referred to in the draft oral decision was the same as that referred to in draft resolution E/1996/L.21, thereby obviating the need for a separate evaluation of the programme budget implications.

Mr. SINGH (India) said that his delegation supported the actions proposed in both the draft oral decision and the draft resolution, but felt that the language of the latter needed further strengthening to make clear the need for suspension of banking secrecy laws to facilitate the investigation of dubious or illicit transactions, and for full cooperation by the Governments concerned with those carrying out the investigations. His delegation also requested that the dates of the resumed session should be announced as far in advance of the session as possible.

The draft oral decision was adopted.

REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS (continued) (E/1996/L.41)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, reporting on the informal consultations held on draft resolution E/1996/L.41, entitled "Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields", drew attention to the following changes. Paragraph 1 should be deleted, as should the words "the recent major" in the second line of paragraph 4, and the words "an indispensable" in paragraph 2 should be changed to "a useful". Paragraph 3 should read as follows: "Also recognizes that the regional commissions are the regional arm of the United Nations in the economic and social fields and facilitate the United Nations role of promoting development and international cooperation;" and paragraph 6 should read as follows: "Recommends that the Council, at its resumed session in the fall of 1996, consider placing the agenda item on regional cooperation at the beginning of the general segment of the substantive session of the Council." Paragraph 7 should be changed to read "Decides to incorporate in the existing format for this agenda item informal

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* Subsequently issued as document E/1996/L.51.

briefings and dialogue between the executive secretaries and the Council, along the lines of the informative briefing held on the margins of its 1996 substantive session;" and a new paragraph should be added at the end. It would read as follows: "Reaffirms the provisions regarding the review by the Council of the regional commissions contained in General Assembly resolution 50/227 and in the Council resolution entitled 'Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227: initiation of reviews'."

Draft resolution E/1996/L.41, as amended, was adopted.

COORDINATION QUESTIONS (continued)

(c) JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS/ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (continued) (E/1996/L.46)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, introduced draft resolution E/1996/L.46, entitled "Report of the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome", which was based on informal consultations held on document E/1996/L.34.

Draft resolution E/1996/L.46 was adopted.

Draft resolution E/1996/L.34 was withdrawn.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (continued) (E/1996/L.44)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, reporting on the results of informal consultations on draft decision E/1996/L.44, said that agreement had been reached on a draft decision* the text of which he proceeded to read out.

Ms. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that although the text did not contain all of the elements contained in the draft decision submitted by her delegation, she was willing to accept it.

Mr. COLOMA (Chile) proposed a minor drafting change.

The draft decision, as orally amended, was adopted.

Draft decision E/1996/L.44 was withdrawn.

Mrs. RODRÍGUEZ CAMEJO (Observer for Cuba) said that she fully supported any decision that enabled the non-governmental organizations which had participated in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to participate in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. However,

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* Subsequently issued as document E/1996/L.49.

the decision was not fully consistent with resolution E/1996/L.25, and it should not be used as a precedent for granting consultative status to, or including on the roster, non-governmental organizations which had participated in other international conferences held in the 1990s.

Mr. MEKDAD (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation was fully committed to the decision, but that the latter was not closely related to the Council's discussion of the previous day concerning resolution E/1996/L.25. He hoped that the decision just adopted would not set a precedent of going beyond the Council's previous decisions.

NEW AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR GENERATING FUNDS (continued) (E/1996/L.47)

Mr. KOVANDA (Czech Republic), Vice-President, introduced draft resolution E/1996/L.47, entitled "New and innovative ideas for generating funds", and recommended it to the Council for adoption.

Ms. MOHAMED (Malaysia) said that her delegation wished to join the consensus on the draft resolution.

Draft resolution E/1996/L.47 was adopted.

Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that, with respect to paragraph 1 of the resolution that had just been adopted, the United States had not accepted the concept of targets for official development assistance.

SUSPENSION OF THE SESSION

Mr. ACUÑA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, while many aspects of the Council's work had been satisfactory, certain aspects had not been encouraging. First, there had been a low level of representation by some international institutions during the Council's high-level segment. The Group was especially concerned at the unexplained absence of the head of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It was also difficult to understand why the heads of the operational agencies were unable to attend the high-level operational activities segment.

Secondly, the Council had continued to face the problem of not having enough time for a free-wheeling discussion during the high-level segment. The Council should give greater consideration to the structure of the high-level segment and take measures to ensure that it produced more tangible results. Thirdly, there was an undeniable need for greater focus in the Council's deliberations, which could be achieved by streamlining the agenda. A shortened agenda was imperative, especially since the Council would have only four weeks

for its substantive session of 1997. In order to ensure productive deliberations, facilitators and chairpersons of negotiating groups should adhere scrupulously to the principle of impartiality and give equal weight to proposals made by all Member States.

Mr. MURPHY (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, and supported by the delegations of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia, as well as Iceland and Norway, said that there had been serious gaps in the organization of the Council's substantive session. The European Union had been looking forward to the participation of the Secretary-General and the heads of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and WTO in the high-level segment. Such high-level attendance, particularly at the high-level segment, was essential to the success of the newly reformed Council and should be maintained in future.

There had been too few meetings involving the members of the Council as a whole with the members of the Bureau, which meant that members were not always aware of what was being planned for the work of the Council. There had been fewer panel discussions than at the previous session. The exchange with the country teams during the operational activities segment had been particularly valuable, which was why the European Union was concerned to hear that that element of the segment might be cut.

Reports had been late and one had not been received until the last few days of the session. Statements, particularly by agency representatives, had often been too lengthy and had limited the time available for meaningful dialogue with delegations. The follow-up to the major conferences had added a new, highly complex area of work for the Council; in particular, the coordination of the implementation of those agreements presented major challenges to the Council as a whole and to the Bureau in particular.

A higher degree of preparation and planning was absolutely essential if the Council was to perform in an effective and credible fashion. Successful preparation and planning required a willingness on the part of the members of the Bureau to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in preparing for and conducting sessions of the Council. The general membership of the Council should be involved as much as possible and on a regular basis with preparations both before and during sessions. The early issue of a programme of work was critical, and deadlines for the submission of reports - all of which should be

submitted before the session - must be adhered to. Finally, the Council should be open to alternative types of debate, such as panel discussions involving outside experts.

Once a session started, the Bureau should continue to play an active part in the work of the Council, holding frequent consultations with the members of the Council. The Bureau should enforce strict adherence to the programme of work and, in particular, the submission of draft resolutions. It should also lay down firm guidelines on the length of statements and apply them vigorously.

The Bureau's efforts must at all times be supported by an efficient secretariat. The European Union had called for the appointment of a single senior-level manager who would be assisted by a reorganized and streamlined secretariat and who would have under his or her authority the three existing economic and social departments. The manager would be responsible for overseeing all development policy issues and would also serve as the Council's executive secretary.

The European Union strongly recommended that the Bureau should, as soon as possible, begin to plan the Council's 1997 organizational meeting. In addition, it should conduct a rapid review of the decisions adopted by the Council at its current session, particularly those involving the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227. It was important to review the agenda of the general segment in the light of reports that had been called for during the current session. The report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) should also be given careful consideration. Finally, the Bureau should begin holding regular briefing sessions on intersessional developments for the membership of the Council as a whole.

Mr. CHULKOV (Russian Federation) said that the results of the Council's high-level debate on illicit drug trafficking would contribute to further international cooperation, which would also involve the United Nations, to combat that plague. The work that had been accomplished on poverty eradication issues during the coordination segment had been a well-structured exercise in the context of coordinated follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations made at major United Nations conferences. His delegation commended the practical spirit of the agreed conclusions that the Council had adopted on that subject.

While the results of the operational activities segment, including high-level meetings with representatives of the international financial institutions, had been positive, his delegation believed that the Council could do more to meet the reform requirements, particularly those stipulated in General Assembly resolution 50/227. It was discouraging that the Council had not been able to hold a thorough discussion on the reports of ACC and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC).

His delegation was disappointed that some important items had been marginalized in the general segment. There was an obvious need to improve the high-level dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions, and it was regrettable that the top officials of the international financial institutions and WTO had not been present at the Council's high-level segment. The Bureau and the secretariat should endeavour to promote a lively dialogue instead of routine monologues and question-answer sessions.

With respect to the general segment itself, his delegation was extremely concerned with the planning of its sessions and the scheduling of meetings, clustering of items and organization of drafting sessions. The secretariat and the Bureau must take measures to improve the organization of the general segment, especially in the light of the Council's shortened session in 1997.

His delegation had already expressed its concern about the situation with regard to documentation. The Council should not accept excuses for the late publication of reports which, judging by their content, could have easily been submitted well before the beginning of the session. The agreed conclusions adopted by the Council in 1995 made it possible to hold the head of the department that did not submit a document on time personally responsible before the Council.

Finally, the Bureau should play an increasingly important role in the preparation, planning and management of all the organizational aspects of the Council's work. It should interact more intensively with the secretariat and the members of the Council through the open-ended consultations recommended by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/227.

Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that his delegation associated itself with the comments made by the representatives of Costa Rica, Ireland and the Russian Federation. It would be useful for the Council to

include in the agenda of its 1997 organizational meeting an item on the review of the 1996 substantive session.

The Chairman declared the substantive session of 1996 suspended.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.